



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEST NILE VIRUS CONFIRMED IN HORSE *First Horse This Year in County with Deadly Virus*

The first case this year of West Nile Virus (WNV) in a San Diego County horse has been confirmed in a 23-year-old unvaccinated quarter horse gelding in La Mesa. A crow found in the Lemon Grove area was also confirmed with WNV, bringing the number of positive birds found with WNV to 12. Additionally, County officials on Wednesday announced the first case of human WNV in the county.

"West Nile Virus is very active this time of year. Within one week, a bird, a horse and a human have all been diagnosed with WNV," said County Veterinarian Dr. Nikos Gurfield. "This horse was not vaccinated. Horse owners are urged to vaccinate their horses against West Nile virus and ensure their vaccines are current,"

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), which tests and confirms the virus in horses, recommends that horses receive boosters every 6 months.

West Nile virus is primarily a bird disease that can be transmitted to humans and horses by infected mosquitoes. Signs of the disease in horses include stumbling, staggering, wobbling, weakness, muscle twitching or inability to stand. A veterinarian should be consulted if a horse is exhibiting these signs.

All residents should take precautions to control mosquitoes by draining unnecessary standing water. Water tanks can be stocked with mosquito fish that consume mosquito larvae. The fish are available for free from County Vector Control. People and horses should minimize time spent outdoors when mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk and use approved mosquito repellants containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. For more information about the West Nile virus, call the County's West Nile virus information line at 1-888-551-INFO (4636) or visit the County's West Nile virus Web site at www.SDFighttheBite.com.

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